

Senate Bill 119

By: Senators Chapman of the 3rd, Thomas of the 2nd, Johnson of the 1st, Tolleson of the 20th and Hill of the 4th

AS PASSED

AN ACT

To amend Code Section 27-4-150 of the Official Code of Georgia, relating to taking, possessing, and dealing in crabs and peelers and related record requirements, so as to postpone the date of an automatic repeal of certain provisions related to sponge crabs; to provide an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

Code Section 27-4-150 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to taking, possessing, and dealing in crabs and peelers and related record requirements, is amended by striking paragraph (2) of subsection (a) and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"(2) It shall be unlawful for any person to take or possess or offer for sale at any time any female blue crab bearing eggs visibly on its body, commonly known as sponge crabs, or any such female blue crab from which the egg pouch or bunion has been removed. It shall not be unlawful temporarily to take such sponge crabs incidental to lawful crabbing operations so long as the sponge crabs are returned immediately to the water free, alive, and unharmed. Nothing in this paragraph shall prohibit any person from importing, transporting, or possessing sponge crabs when such person can provide documentary evidence showing that the sponge crabs were taken outside this state in full compliance with the laws of the state of origin. He or she must have an executed invoice showing the point of origin of such sponge crabs and exhibit such an invoice upon demand to any conservation ranger. This paragraph shall be automatically repealed on July 1, 2008, unless continued by the General Assembly following a report on the status of the blue crab resource and fishery."

SECTION 2.

This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law without such approval.

SECTION 3.

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.